

Where can I find more information?

For more information on LGBT issues; questions regarding OHIO SafeZone, SpeakOUT!, and campus organizations; or to check-out a book, magazine, or video from our Resource Library; visit the LGBT Center.



The OHIO SafeZone project is a voluntary, educational effort to support LGBT & Questioning students, faculty, and staff at Ohio University by attending a two hour workshop and by displaying a SafeZone card. If you are an LGBT supporter, it is time to act!

SpeakOUT!

Speaker's Bureau & Education Project

SpeakOUT! is a dynamic speaker's bureau and education project that has been assisting class instructors, student organizations, and resident assistants with their speaker/education needs for years. Formats include a panel presentation, Coming Out 101, or tailor-made presentations.

Resource Library

Our Resource Library is a collection of books, magazines, and videos on a variety of topics including LGBT history, legislation, biographies, fiction, and religion in relation to LGBT concerns, as well as coming out resources. Check it out today!

Campus Resources

ActOUT is a LGBT political action orientated organization.

ALLY is a group striving for the equal treatment of all minority groups, specifically focusing on the issues of LGBT individuals.

Bi the Way is a bisexual student support and social group.

Empowering Women of Ohio (EWO) is an organization that bridges the gap between LGBT issues and Women's Rights concerns.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Commission of Student Senate

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Commission of Graduate Student Senate

Open Doors: Ohio University's LGBTIQQA Student Union. Is the long-time OU (Early 1970's) umbrella LGBT organization that provides social activities, support and educational events.

OUTgrads & Non-Trads is a social network for all LGBT grad students and non-traditional aged undergrads.

SHADES is for people of color who are at various stages of understanding the coming out process, questioning or accepting their sexuality and/or understanding the LGBT community.

Unify is a group of diverse students committed to helping increase diversity and understanding at Ohio University.

*As of July 2007



OHIO
UNIVERSITY

LGBT ISSUES 101

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Center

**354 Baker Center
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701**

**740.593.0239
www.ohio.edu/lgbt**

Your loved one has shown great trust in you by telling you that she or he is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). Families are often full of questions when a LGBT person “comes out.” This pamphlet is designed to give you answers to common questions that parents and other family members ask, to provide you with vocabulary that can make it easier to speak with your LGBT family member, and to offer you some resources.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: How do people become LGBT?

A: Researchers cannot yet definitely say. Most believe that childhood experiences, genetics, hormones, and environmental factors all combine to influence sexuality and gender.

Q: With all the prejudice and discrimination they face, how can LGBT people be happy?

A: All members of non-majority groups face many pressures, but they also realize that acceptance of oneself brings about a sense of joy that outweighs any pain or difficulty that prejudice may cause. The most painful situation that a person is likely to face is rejection by family members or others to whom they are close because of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Q: Aren't all homosexuals child molesters?

A: No. Research demonstrates that over 90% of sexual offenses involving children are committed by straight male adults against female children. In fact, studies such as Groth's study *Men Who Rape* show that heterosexual males are more likely a threat to children than homosexual adults. Lesbians and other female adults are rarely charged with molesting children.

Q: Isn't it immoral to be LGBT?

A: While six Hebrew and Christian Biblical passages have been isolated and used by some to condemn homosexual people, many theologians and church

leaders have begun to question this practice. New knowledge about homosexuality and human sexual expression in general have resulted in a more positive religious perspective, and Biblical scholars continue to stress that all passages of scripture must be considered in context, rather than “lifted out” of scripture to suit any one person's agenda. Many Jewish and Christian leaders have been publicly supportive of LGBT people, and many groups accept them as members. Christian denominations often have supportive groups like Dignity (Roman Catholic), Integrity (Episcopalian), and Lutherans Concerned that assure LGBT people of their place in the life of these organized religious groups.

Q: What do I do if one of my family members comes out to me as LGBT?

A: Remember, first of all, that this person has probably spent a lot of time preparing to share this information with you and is likely to be very anxious about how you will respond.

Try to be glad that your family member has trusted you enough to tell you. Although you may feel shock or surprise, do not immediately assume that this person needs to see a mental health professional. If your relative is having trouble sorting out the myths or accepting this identity, there are LGBT organizations that offer counseling services or referrals to counselors who can help them. These organizations can provide you with information as well.

You may also want to look up the Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG) group that meets in your area. P-FLAG affiliates provide support, education, and advocacy to families and friends of LGBT people in their communities. You may want to “catch up” and ask how long your family member has been aware of his/her orientation or if there is someone special in his/her life.

Be honest about any negative feelings you may have but remain open to the possibility that your feelings may change and say so. Don't slam the door on your relationship.

Finally, realize that many family members experience their own “coming out” process as they integrate this new knowledge about their loved one. Do not hesitate to look for resources for yourself to help you deal with the changes in your family. Above all, remember that you are still family, which is one of the most precious human bonds that exists.

Resources

Check out these and other books on family issues and coming out issues from the LGBT Center's Library:

Now That You Know
by Betty Fairchild, et al.

Family Outing
by Chastity Bono

Coming Out to Parents
by Mary Borhek

The Other Side of the Closet
by Amity Buxton

Beyond Acceptance
by Carolyn Griffin, et al.

For more information about
coming out log on to:
www.ohio.edu/lgbt

Information provided by the staff of the LGBT Student Services at Iowa State University, lgbtss@iastate.edu